

THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cooper.*



MARJORY SAT DOWN AT HER FATHER'S FEET, LEANING HER HEAD ON HIS KNEE.

THE FORGED WILL.

CHAPTER X.

"My dear," said Mr. Brimble, "our being so late is entirely Mr. Jobson's fault. He has been telling us such astonishing things that all we have heard before from him has vanished into what Char calls 'blue distance.' Eh, Char?" he continued, putting his arm fondly round her, "wouldn't you have enjoyed being in my waistcoat pocket? Miss Cruden," he added, addressing that lady, "your brother has been almost as bad as Jobson, and I shall turn him over to you for correction."

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Mrs. Brimble looked stately, so far as her peevishness would allow her; Flora was half asleep over some embroidery—Miss Cruden, rather more than half, and hardly awoke to reply.

"Valary is very ill," said the squire, advancing to his wife, "and we are going in a body to see him to-morrow morning, first thing."

"What do you mean by going in a body?"

"Why, I mean 'Eu,' and I, and the doctor."

"I?" exclaimed Mrs. Brimble.

"You—no," said the squire, recollecting himself. "Jobson I meant."

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PRICE ONE PENNY.

"A strange mistake!" said the lady, superciliously. "You said 'you, and I, and the doctor.'"

"Now, Mary," said the squire, in a whisper, "just look at him as he is standing between the two girls; isn't he a fine handsome fellow? did you ever see any one like him?"

"Dear me, Mr. Brimble, I never saw any one like him but Saunders, our last footman, and he had just the same kind of nose. I see nothing particular in him; and I think it very forward of him to talk to the girls when there is Miss Cruden by."

The squire laughed: he was afraid of going further; but Mrs. Brimble had not finished. "Indeed, Mr. Brimble, your indiscretion is beyond everything. Here is a perfect stranger, who, because he happens to be agreeable to you, and is able to talk, is made quite at home among us, and we are expected to treat him like a friend. If you have no regard for your daughters, I have; it surprises me, after all the cautions I have given you, and the number of things I have saved you from, that you will not learn prudence."

"My dear, you have enough for us all. It's seldom that more than a fair share of wisdom falls to the lot of any family, and you have monopolized all that was intended for the Brimbles. But tell me," he said, trying to be grave—though the many mischievous twinkles of his eye ought to have betrayed him to so keen a judge of appearances as Mrs. Brimble considered herself to be—"tell me, Mary, do you really look on Jobson as an impostor?"

"Mr. Brimble," returned the lady, with an impressive shake of the head, "I say nothing; but as to proof of the contrary, why, with me there is none, and there is something about him that is very much like an adventurer. I may be wrong—I would not be uncharitable; but—"

"Then you wouldn't advise me to let him visit here; in short, you would have me cut him?"

"All I desire is caution, Mr. Brimble. He has a manner I do not admire, and I think I may be allowed to be a judge of such things."

"Well, I will be careful. He has rather a designing look, now I come to examine him," said the squire, putting up his eye-glass; "and he seems to me to be just now taking the bearings of Bessie Cruden's cap. I think I must go and put her on scent of danger."

"Ah! you will be surprised one day, Mr. Brimble, and then you will remember my words, as you have often done before."

"Well, Mary, if I'm wrong this time, you shall be right without question for ever, and administer Lynch law to your heart's delight; but if I should be right, what then? It's just possible, though, he may turn out an adventurous 'footman'—some spirited Saunders, as you fancy."

"Charity," said the lady, impatiently, as she saw the object of her suspicion approaching her daughter. "Mr. Brimble, pray go and entertain your guest, and send Charity to me—I wish to speak to her."

The squire obeyed, and so did Charity, very reluctantly. Florence, having heard from Dr. Cruden of the intended expedition to Parker's Dew, assailed him with innumerable questions as to what was the matter—what would happen if Sir Valary died, where Marjory would go, etc., etc.; and there was much wonderment among all the ladies as to the merits of the case, when they separated for the night.

In a room, dimly lighted by the early sun, streaming through narrow windows in a heavy wall, sat the sick man with Marjory at his side.

"It is growing into day, Marjory," he said, in a feeble voice, raising himself from his half-recumbent posture.

Marjory, tenderly kissing his forehead, prepared the draught which Dr. Cruden had left for her father to take on his awaking.

Poor Marjory! all night she had been watching; every sound had made her heart beat. It might be Dr. Cruden; he promised to return—promised to bring her uncle; but the night had worn away; her father, sleeping and waking, had on the whole been more restful, more at ease, than she could have hoped. "Something has kept him away," she thought; but fatigue and anxiety added to disappointment had for the time quelled much of her dauntless spirit.

"Yours has been a dreary life, my child," said the old man—old, not by years, but through the ravages of an embittered spirit—"your youth buried in this gloomy place—no companionship—"

"No companionship!" exclaimed Marjory, nearly letting the medicine fall in her surprise.

More groaning out his feelings than addressing her, the old man continued: "I have many sins on my head—my greatest, my love for you—drove me to—Alas! what a delusion! I see it now; he was right. I have been cruelly unjust—I have crushed your youth."

"Who is right? who dares to say so? Cruel! are you not the very life of my heart, my father, my own, own father?" cried Marjory, closely embracing him.

"It has been delusion—strange delusion—fears for your future have driven me hither and thither. Oh, conscience! oh, the wrongs that I have done! Marjory, I implore you, beware of sin; poverty cannot make a hell, sin can. If I had resisted the tempter, I should not have been thus—blighted, cursed."

Never had Marjory heard words like these from her father's lips. The suspicions she had allowed herself in were faint, compared with these vague confessions. Lost in pain and wonder, she mingled her tears with his, entreating him to be comforted, and to remember how precious to her was his love, how burdensome life would be without it. After a short pause, she said in a gentle tone, "Father, dear father, have you any secret trouble on your mind? will you hide it from me—from Marjory?"

Sir Valary was long silent: while Marjory fondly smoothed the long white locks that strayed upon his shoulder. "Perhaps, father, while the world counts you rich, you are poor, or you fear to be so, for my sake."

Sir Valary laid his hand upon her head, as she knelt by his side, but made no reply.

"I hear footsteps," said Marjory, opening the door.

"Mistress Gillies, madam, entreats you so far to consider your health, as to retire for a short time for refreshment, allowing me to take your place. I should not have left it till now to proffer my unworthy services, but I feared disturbing either your or my honoured master's sleep. I have been some time assuring myself that I heard your voices."

Poor Shady had, the whole of that night, made the passage his chamber, sitting bolt upright with his back near his master's door, fearing that Marjory might require help before it could be rendered, unless he were a wakeful watcher.

Marjory saw plainly enough that something more than the request he had made had brought him, and immediately guessed that the doctor and her uncle had arrived.

"Where?" she said quietly, as she passed from the room, Sir Valary having entreated her to obey the summons of Mrs. Gillies.

"In the hall below," replied Shady, in the same tone. Much exhausted, she gathered up her spirits and descend-

ing the stairs, had her hand upon the door, when Mrs. Gillies, who was awaiting her, lifted it off hastily. "Are they not there?" said Marjory, in surprise.

Instead of answering, the housekeeper laid her finger on her lips, and, taking Marjory's hand, led her through the passage that led to the kitchen. She followed unresistingly, too weary almost for curiosity. When safe within her own precincts, the housekeeper said, "My dear young lady, Bloodworth is in the hall; he has got Shady's books and many papers, and wants to see Sir Valary as soon as he can; for he says he has a long journey before him, and has nothing but pleasant news, and that everything is going well, and Sir Valary will not be fretted, and many more fine speeches; so I thought it was better to leave him quiet, for I knew Dr. Cruden would be as good as his word, and be here soon, and then his chance of doing mischief would be over. I have turned the key outside the door, without his knowing it."

Mrs. Gillies was so pleased with her own adroitness, that she scarcely noticed the colourless lips and sunken eyes of Marjory at first. "Ah!" cried she, "here am I chattering, and you too ill to listen."

Warmth, restoratives, and an hour's rest brought back some colour, some sign of life, some spirit in the eye of Marjory, and the first return of power took her again to the side of her father. His head, a little on one side, rested on the back of his chair, and his eyes were closed as though in sleep. Shady had arranged his pillow, adjusted the room, and with all the ingenuity of affection, tried to give an air of cheerfulness and comfort to the apartment. With his usual deferential bow he left the room as she entered it, determined, whatever might come, that if the doctor did not appear till midnight, Bloodworth should not have access without him to Sir Valary. Marjory sat down silently in her old place at her father's feet, leaning her head upon his knee, having told Shady not to allow them to be disturbed until Dr. Cruden's arrival. "It cannot be long," she said; "before he comes."

A gentle sigh escaped the sleeper. "He is awaking," said Marjory, kissing the hand that lay close beside her cheek; but sleep seemed to return again, no other sound followed; and, resting her face against him, while she clasped the hand in her own, overcome with weariness, she slept.

THE TOURIST IN IRELAND.

III.—ROUND THE WALLS OF DERRY.

A compact little city, set on a hill, which is crested by the tower and spire of its renowned cathedral fortress; a wide smooth river almost encircling the hill—more effective rampart than the venerable walls, which an observant eye can trace midway among the crowded buildings; a goodly line of masts and funnels: girding populous quays. Such was our first impression of Londonderry, as we stepped from the railway terminus into open view, and beheld at some distance the long low wooden bridge which gives access across the Foyle.

That railway line had for the best part of the last hour been bringing us along the edge of the Lough, where King William's ships once rode in sight of the famished and beleagured town. Fine mural precipices flank the iron road for miles; and sometimes the steam-horse darts right into their centre, through black tunnels, and emerges at the other side on the same wastes of tidal slob, where the same cranes stand with shoulders in their ears, and the same flocks of white gulls congregate on sandy patches. Then we come under a cliff of chalk covered with black conglomerate, as if molten

basalt had burst up through a bed of flints and boulders and grasped them into its own mass. This is at Dunhill. The blue Innishowen Head looms across the waters, foremost of a tier of dim Donegal heights, and ships sail peacefully in mid-channel, passed by a rapid saucy steamer; but they are satisfied to do their work slowly and surely, despite the racing spirit of the age.

Culmore Fort brought us on historic soil. Thenceforward, our fancies were busy about the siege and its events, which have made Derry one of the few British towns with warlike repute cleaving to it still. Soon we reached ground which the troops of James had occupied, and whence they had doubtless often gazed fiercely at the indomitable little city on the hill, with its closed gates and starving defenders. Yonder white country mansion, built on a green slope amid trees, is named Boom Hall. One thinks of the slow sailing of the "Mountjoy" against the barrier of beams and chains; of the crash; of the gallant ship cast aground; of the gaining tide floating her; of the weak cries of victory and gladness from lips parched with hunger; of the mighty contest between tyranny and freedom which closed at that collision. Derry is the central point in that war between the principles of absolutism and constitutional liberty, and at this day we owe a debt to its brave besieged.

The wooden bridge which we traverse is an American importation, set up by Mr. Samuel Cox of Boston in 1789, a hundred years after the historic boom was broken: it cost eleven thousand pounds. The river is here more than a thousand feet wide, and fifty arches admit the flowing waters. Paying toll at a gate, we find ourselves at the foot of a very steep street, and afterwards ascertain that all the streets in Derry are fond of these acute angles and inclinations. Midway, past some huge factories of the usual pattern—great lightsome windows and short lengths of masonry between—we reach the wall. Long ago, houses and streets have overflowed the civic boundaries, and crowded to the base of the pyramidal hill. The gates whose closing resounded through Britain and Ireland, and shook a despot on his throne, stand open continually in our peaceful times—unless once a year, on the anniversary of the feat of the Apprentice Boys, when the successors of those heroes repeat the olden deed, though with a difference of difficulty. So we tourists enter unopposed on the continuation of the steep street from the water's edge, which terminates in what is called the Diamond, an oblong market-place, whence radiated all the old thoroughfares like spokes. The town hall, lifting up itself in the midst, wears on the top of its vane a gilt ship—perhaps a remembrancer of the victualling-craft which saved the city so memorably.

Coleraine has a Diamond also. It seems to be the fashion in these northern towns, which are built apparently after the same pattern each with other, by the colonists settled in James the First's time. At every corner, and the midst of every side, a street strikes away from this Derry Diamond. We are directed to ascend the one leading to Bishop's Gate, as we seek entrance to the cathedral.

It is but an insignificant building: double embattled walls along the nave, and octagon turrets surrounding the conical spire; which last resembles nothing so much as the folded grey cone of paper into which a grocer's boy wraps brown sugar for poor customers—such a cornucopia inverted. But no Gothic magnificence could more impress the mind of a visitor with awe and emotion than this plain sturdy church, once the ark of Protestant freedom. You remember the guns parked

on its tower, the "No Surrender" flag floating above, the fervid prayers with which these aisles re-echoed—prayers of brave men in their sorest need. You don't care what is the architecture of a building so replete with heart-stirring memories.

In the porch is preserved, worthily, a relic at which one may gaze with a strange emotion: a great black shell, eighteen inches in circumference, one of those cast from the mortars of King James. It is mounted on a fluted pedestal, and at first glance a stranger would think that somebody had been learning the use of the globes then and there, for the ball is girdled with a brass equator in high polish, on which is inscribed: "This shell was thrown into this city by the besieging army, and contained proposals for a surrender; it fell into the graveyard of this cathedral, on the tenth day of February, 1689." We can fancy the haggard faces which gathered round this mute emissary and scanned its message; and how the hearts and brows of Walker, Michelburn, Murray, set into iron sternness about the resolve that to the death they would uphold liberty and the Bible against despotism and popery; and how the cry of a noble desperation burst from their lips, "No Surrender!"

Within the large church we beheld certain bleached banners suspended above the communion table, embroidered white silk, with perceptible faded fleurs-de-lis and other French symptoms. "These were captured during the siege," quoth our guide, a woman wearing a black bonnet and carrying huge keys—a veracious-looking woman: so we gaze at the relics with interest. Certainly they are in wonderful preservation. But another party comes up presently, and an inquisitive youth extorts the fact that these are but representative banners; that white silk was spun a hundred and fifty years after the staves and bullion tassels had waved at the siege over the troops of the grand Monarque. The real fragments of the French colours are stitched carefully and invisibly in the midst of layers of silk; but we feel as if we had been somewhat defrauded of our sensibilities on the occasion. An inscription on the window over the communion table sets forth how the originals were taken by the men of Derry from De Rosen's regiments.

Another inscription, on a monument near by, strikes us as one of the most beautiful we have ever seen. It is in memory of a young clergyman, who was cut off by fever in discharge of his duty as curate of the parish; and the accompanying lines run thus:

"Down through our crowded lanes and closer air,
O Friend! how beautiful thy footsteps were:
When through the fever's fire at last they trod,
A Form was with thee, like the Son of God:
'Twas but one step for those victorious feet,
From their day's walk into the golden street;
And they who saw that walk, so bright and brief,
Have marked this marble with their hope and grief."

And, to our thinking, the record of unobtrusive piety reads well beside those other records of warlike achievement.

The bishop's chair is two hundred years old, its laced open-work carved with wondrous pliant effect; and a mitre as handsome as ever that head-dress seemed to the longing imagination of country curate, surmounts it. The pulpit is that whence Walker was wont to harangue the fainting spirits of his comrades, sword girt under his gown—the very sword which is worn by his statue on the bastion outside. Let us ascend the tower. A door beside the shell-pedestal admits us to the dark winding stair. Thirty steps bring us to the first story, where hang the ropes of the ten bells dwelling in darkness above. Further on, we find an airy grated loft used for

the drying-place of a laundry. Further on, we reach the great rusty wheels and black mouths of the bells; and yet two stages further, we sneak out through a trap-door at the base of the crowning grey cone and look about us.

A mighty circle of green country merges afar into the shining sea; closely clustered beneath us are houses and streets within the ring of the wall, and reaching out beyond the wall in various lengths, as if the town had not made up its mind how far it would go, now that it was freed from the olden limits. Blue smoke has picturesquely hazed over the buildings, but clear beyond are wide folds of the Foyle broadening to the Lough, and sprinkled with ships. Ah! what anxious eyes glanced from these very battlements upon the inactive fleet of Kirke, which had bread on board and would not move to bring it to the famished. What beating hearts have leaned on those parapets, and watched the building of the boom to shut out every hope, and gazed on the tents and serried ranks of the armies hemming them closely round—ay, and on the miserable crowd of fellow Protestants, driven under the walls by the savage De Rosen, to die of hunger and exposure before the eyes of their brethren.

Viewing the ground from this point, one is amazed how the devoted little city escaped. James's cannon were planted on those green slopes yonder, across a hollow now filled with smoky chimneys and lanes. None but lion-hearts would have deemed the place tenable before overwhelming force. We don't wonder that the king withdrew himself after eleven vain assaults had been baffled, and peevishly remarked that an English army would have brought him the town piecemeal in half that time. Truly every conceivable advantage, except that of a righteous cause, was for the besiegers and against the besieged.

Returning back adown the hundred and sixty steps, we observe, during a rest on a bench in the porch, that an old black slab is fixed into the wall opposite, which bears this almost obliterated inscription:—

"Ano. Do. 1633. Car. Regis. 9. If stones could speake—Then London's prayse—Shovlde sovrnde who bvlit—This chvrch and cittie—From the grovrnde."

Wherein the attentive reader may discern something like rhyme. And he also may discover that the prefix "London" to "Derry," records a historic fact, that the latter city was a sapling planted by the former, in days when Ireland was looked upon as only a little nearer and a little less savage than Virginia, and when settling of colonies was in fashion. James¹ gave certain lands here, extending over 210,000 acres, to certain trading companies in London; many northern towns belong still in head-rent to these companies. You can see cannon idly mounted on Derry walls, bearing the names of such trading guilds as donors. There had been an ecclesiastical foundation on this hill girdled by the Foyle, since so far back as 546, when Columbkil, of Iona, established an abbey. A very different description of saint, Dominic by name, founded a very different convent for his order here, in 1274, and huddled huts sprang up in its shadow like unwholesome fungi of pauperism. But Derry was no town until James I's colonists built again a fort which Elizabeth's soldiers had perforce abandoned, and cast up walls in 1617.

Leaving the fortress-church, we pass through the grave-yard and a little wicket-gate, to the aforesaid celebrated walls. The guide-book tells us they are from fourteen to thirty-seven yards in breadth, from twenty to twenty-five feet in height, and a mile in circumference. Just outside the cathedral is the principal battery;

twenty-one embrasures remain, empty of cannon now. The fortification has become a peaceable promenade—a broad, airy public walk, where the present and the past meet together. Presently we come upon a bastion turned into a garden, and gay with sun-flowers, dahlias, sweet-peas, love-lies-bleeding, and richly perfumed with that common sweet, mignonette; and flung down among the bloom, bathed to the lips in gentle greenery, is a grim old gun—one of those cannon whence pealed the inarticulate defiance of the "Maiden City" to her kingly suitor. A long holiday has rusted the piece of ordnance; may its repose be perpetual! It is of moulding at which Armstrong's or Whitworth's skilled craftsmen would smile: but good work was wrought by its ungainliness nevertheless, and it has earned its vacation.

Five similar veterans are mounted near Walker's Pillar. The renowned "Old Mag" bears the city arms emblazoned on her carriage, and keeps guard still towards the circling sweep of green heights once perilously peopled with foes. And George Walker's statue stands appropriately on the same bastion, that whence the deadliest fire was kept up during the siege. Names of the chief men who helped the heroic minister in his brave resistance are carved on the pedestal of the Doric column. "Michelburn, Baker, Murray—Cairnes, Lake, Browning"—are the peerage of Londonderry.

Walker stands in a preaching attitude, his arm extended towards the Lough, his garb the dress of the age; it is difficult to conceive of heroism under a full-bottomed wig and a long wide-pocketed coat, even though the veritable sword of the commander rusts by his side. The inclosure at foot of the column is utilized at present by containing a travelling photographic van, curtained with many colours. Look over the rails of the bastion; the worst outlet of Derry is below—infirm brick houses huddled together. Beyond are the autumnal fields burned with various harvest hues. A little further along the wall, two or three ragged urchins are climbing the ramparts which James's army could not scale, and carrying by storm and riding triumphant on the invulnerable parapets. Nine aged sycamore trees, gnarled and warty, and with blackened roots arching above ground, vegetate near by. They look blasted enough to have felt the hot breath of the cannonade a hundred and seventy years ago. More strips of garden are on the bastions; some cottages opening green gates upon the wall; scores of houses backed up against it, the mass of historic masonry an incubus upon back windows. And thus we come round to the Ship Quay Gate, and look over the parapet upon the steepest street in Derry, proceeding up from the water's edge. It must be impracticable for vehicles; and a tradition exists that formerly the inhabitants were wont to go to parties at each other's houses of winter evenings, by self-moving sledges—the weight of one descending the incline being sufficient to bring up another equally freighted; whence the reflective reader may determine the angle of Ship Quay Street with the horizon.

Another segment of the circle brings us to the Ferry Gate, being that closed by the Apprentice Boys on the memorable 7th December. Everybody knows that when Antrim's regiment, "men tall and terrible of aspect," appeared on that landing-place, three hundred yards distant, and a miserable fluctuation of fear rendered the civic authorities irresolute, nine of these brave lads rushed to the main-guard, seized the keys, and drew up the bridge in the very teeth of the enemy. It was as if David had flung down a gauntlet to Goliath; but twenty thousand men could not undo the valiant deed of those nine boys.

There were originally four gates; but the requirements of town traffic have pierced two additional, making the number six. Bishop's Gate is a handsome triumphal arch, erected to the memory of William III, and inaugurated at the centenary of the siege, in 1789. Its emblematical carvings are very fine; but, somehow, one would sooner have the old battered stonework, devoid of all ornament except the moral of its story.

We could willingly have walked a dozen miles on the round of Derry walls, and been not soon weary, as on common roads. Well may the citizens preserve and cherish as their palladium these ramparts, which testify to one of the noblest strifes in our British history. Long may it be ere the increasing trade or extending manufactures of the little city, or even its partly-fulfilled ambition of becoming an American packet-station, and emporium of transatlantic commerce, will deafen its inhabitants to the voice which speaks from that far conflict adown the ages, saying: "We suffered, that you might enjoy! We purchased, with tears, and famine, and blood, and cruel rending of closest ties, the freedom and the open Bible which are yours! Remember us, oh money-making men of the nineteenth century, and learn that there are possessions dearer than gold!"

THE HIGHEST VILLAGE IN EUROPE.

MÜRREN, which well deserves its prominent reputation as commanding from its exalted position a more glorious prospect than tongue can describe or pencil portray, has only latterly been brought before the notice of the traveller. When we visited it a year or two ago, our names were inscribed on the first page of the visitors' register, and the ensuing description of the difficulties attending our ascent from the valley below will sufficiently make it plain that the summer tide of English tourists had not as yet resulted in a clearing of the path up this "Hill Difficulty," or in a provision for the temporal well-being of those fortunate travellers who, surmounting the obstacles on the way, succeeded in reaching the summit.

And at this point my discernment enables me to divine the question, most logical reader, which presents itself to your mind: "Why," you naturally inquire, "has this magnificent point of view (for such the veracious writer of these pages will undoubtedly represent it to be) remained for so many years an unknown spot to the army of excursionists who have annually invaded the mountains and valleys of Switzerland? Why is it that the echoes of the mountain of Mürren have only within so short a period learnt to answer to other tongues than those of the Swiss mountaineers and chamois-hunters?"

Which most reasonable inquiry I proceed to answer. Know, then, that although no visible captain summons to his call that motley throng which you have with apt similitude termed the "army of excursionists"—though no adventurous leader goes before the nomadic tribe of explorers who forsake old England for the more varied sights and scenes of continental lands, yet are they all in dutiful submission dependent for their guidance in travel, for their direction in the search of lodging, and for the judicious regulation of the *£ s. d.* department, upon a voice which, issuing forth from the recesses of Albemarle Street, penetrates with authority to the ears of all those voyagers by land and by water to whom the English tongue is familiar. The name of the potentate who thus exercises a beneficent sway over travellers in general, has on the continent become a warning sound to extortionate inn-keepers, and a by-word among the

race of guides, ciceroes, and volturiers; and the sight of one of his red-coated emissaries, to which, bidding farewell to metaphor, we may give their plain prose names of "Murray's Handbooks," is as distinguishing a characteristic of the English travelling party as is the family bundle of umbrellas, or the ponderous array of trunks and portmanteaus, which, together with a few other little attendant paraphernalia, proclaim the nationality of the owners thereof.

Up to the year 1857, "Murray" had made no mention of Mürren, and consequently Mürren was, to the ordinary British tourist, a *terra incognita*. But it so happened that a gentleman of independent and exploratory genius, unwilling to tread in the beaten track, made broad and evident by successive generations of excursionists, discarded Murray's leadership, and, striking out literally new paths for himself, presented to the public a small red hand-book, concise, portable, and to the point, entitled "Practical Swiss Guide, to see all that ought to be seen, in the shortest period and at the least expense." "A most desirable companion this!" you will exclaim. So it was, that its author was or is supposed to have been to the highest village in Europe what (to ascend in the scale of discovery) Columbus was to America; and so it was that those who read "the little red book" went to Mürren, ourselves among the rest.

It was on a hot, a very hot day at the close of July, that, starting at about six A. M. from Thun, we crossed its fairy and romantic lake in the unromantic steamboat, which, say what you will of its convenience, sadly interferes with one's indulging in visions of the imagination. But even from this puffing steamer, not to be distinguished in its general features from any other plebeian specimen of the genus steamer which plies between London Bridge and Gravesend, while its more fortunate *fac simile* is mirrored in the same waters which for ever reflect Alpine heights and everlasting snows, even with the accompaniment of a miserable band of performers, who disturbed the harmonies of nature with a jangling discord of inharmonious sounds, the glorious sight of our old familiar friends the Stockhorn and Niessen, with their bare heads and wooded bases, and of the yet more lofty Blümlis Alp and its neighbouring peaks, was a worthy instalment of the yet more wondrous beauty which this day was to introduce to us.

We were obliged to descend from the heights of contemplation on that summer's morning to a survey of the various and motley throng of vehicles assembled at Neuhaus, whose owners clamoured for employ, each more vociferous and demonstrative than his neighbour. After a stormy scene, in which different translations of the same fact, that never was a more extortionate crew assembled, resounded on every side, we found ourselves driving along the level road to Interlaken, where we breakfasted; and then, starting in a comfortable carriage and pair from the hotel—a carriage and pair found to be forthcoming by our host, who seemed to feel the heat of the weather, and who had a little before assured us of the hopelessness of procuring a vehicle of any kind that morning—we made our way up the wondrous valley of Lauterbrunnen, to the starting-post for pedestrian and equestrian excursionists, the "Hotel du Capricorn."

We may not stay to speak of Lauterbrunnen, as this chapter is dedicated to Mürren. A due description would demand a larger space than we can afford; moreover, the fair Jungfrau—virgin-queen of mountains—is to be introduced to our readers when they shall be in a position more nearly to appreciate her beauty; and the Jungfrau is to Lauterbrunnen what the stately shrine is to the grand and lofty avenue by which we approach it.

Behold us, then, having paid farewell to our carriage, mounted on horses, and, leaving the beaten path to the Wengern Alp, common to all travellers, on our left, now taking a track to the right, and at once commencing a laborious ascent. We were three in party, all enthusiastic, and all glad to be amongst the early visitors to the spot which some friends who had previously ascended thither had glowingly described. Our guides—two in number—were like most of their fraternity, intelligent and good-humoured; our horses not certainly in appearance such as we should covet for a ride in the Park; but if the proverb hold good that "handsome is that handsome does," unexceptionable in every respect. They coasted without accident along the brink of precipices, and safely arrived at the summit of ladders of rocks. "It was at this point, *mein Herr*," observed one of our guides, in German patois, "that the horse of an English *Fraülein*, unable to climb the rock, fell backwards, and was dashed to pieces at the bottom of the precipice. The lady herself was miraculously preserved, being caught in the branches of some pine-trees growing out of the side of the cliff." This was an encouraging little narration, sounding in our ears, as it did, at the place where the sun seemed the hottest and the rocks the steepest. Our horses, to whom we intrusted the choice of the path, seemed to spring from one landing-place to another—clinging, now here, now there, to a place of sure footing—now slipping—as quickly righting themselves—while we, rocking backwards and forwards, hardly spoke, but waited from minute to minute to see whether it would be possible to clamber up that ledge in front—to climb the track of that torrent without incurring the fate of the English lady, with the probable omission in our case of the saving clause in the narration supplied by the interposing pine-branches.

The reader of these pages may question the accuracy of my report respecting the difficult and precipitous path, since a better and easier one was in contemplation when we ascended to Mürren, with which he may have made acquaintance. English gold has a talismanic influence thousands of feet above the sea-level, and British travellers having begun to show themselves upon the plateau of Mürren, we beheld a small auberge, in a skeleton and unroofed condition as yet, already rising at their summons, and other indications were not wanting to prove that the villagers would be very cordially willing to make them welcome.

Crossing the Staubach above the fall, we came to an easier stage in the ascent. We were under the shade of lofty trees, the mountain air was light, and now comparatively cool, and weary guides and weary horses, to say nothing of their riders, were glad to take advantage of a good halting-ground. High, high up above the valley we had ascended—up into the still mountain region, where seems to reign a perpetual sabbath—high above the deep rock-bound valley, whose church and nestling village might be dimly seen as a speck below; higher and higher we rose, once more starting on our way; now through a forest path bordered by the bright rhododendron and the blue gentianella, and now pausing at the opening of the wood to gaze with bewilderment and wonder at the stately spectacle, which at this point of the ascent first bursts in full splendour upon the traveller's gaze.

It seemed, indeed, as if we were admitted into the very presence-chamber of the mountains—as if, assembled in silent council, they gazed from their lofty altitudes with calm survey, demanding from the spell-bound intruder upon their ancient domain that he should not with light and careless tread approach even "the utmost

bound of the everlasting hills." There they stood in solemn conclave—the lofty Eiger, the Jungfrau, virgin-queen of the assembly, the Mönch with his cowl, stern and threatening in aspect, and other magnates of the lofty throng, calm and still in their unclouded majesty, every peak and parapet shown out in distinct outline against the deep blue of the summer sky.

With such thoughts as these, and hushed almost into silence, we pursued the now easy path from the termination of the forest to "the highest village in Europe"—a high-sounding title for a very small assemblage of very small cottages; the great wonder being that they should exist at all in that bleak exposed situation, where avalanches and destructive torrents, to say nothing of the long and terrible winter snows, constantly menace the inhabitants. I found myself inquiring why any one should live there, so far removed from the lower world, which, until the next summer, would probably remain totally unconscious of the event, were the whole of Mürren engulfed in an avalanche. They must lead a strange life—sometimes, for weeks together, enveloped in the clouds, and for months half buried in snow. When we arrived, we found the women, with their large hats and long rakes, busily employed in gathering in the scanty supply of dried grass for fodder, which grew in patches on the brow of a terrible precipice; and on the brink of these same precipitous heights, unprotected by rail or parapet, played the cloud-born children of Mürren, as carelessly as though they had been in the valley, while the parents looked on at their infantine gambols with perfect unconcern.

Our little procession halted at the door of a small cottage, the owner of which had engaged in the profitable investment of supplying excursionists with refreshment. It was a difficult matter to understand the wild patois of the old man who came to us for orders—judging naturally that our three or four hours' ascent would have sharpened our appetite. We asked for fruit. No fruit grew at Mürren; it was too high up. We asked for gâteau. Nothing of the sort was extant. The only things they could offer were cream and eggs. While we waited for these, we occupied ourselves in investigating the travellers' book, only just begun, and in noting the experiences of previous adventurers. Some were dreary; as, for instance, the following:—

"Came to Mürren; a rainy day,
Saw nothing, and went away!"

One party, surprised by storms, had been obliged, four in number, to pass the night in the dismal little room whence we beheld the unclouded panorama of snowy peaks; while two or three expressed more or less dismally their disappointment in encountering rain and thick fog.

"Why," inquired one of the party, "does the Jungfrau so often screen her brow behind a drapery of clouds and mist?" The answer was immediate:

"The Monk is the Jungfrau's confessor,
And she silently tells her tale;
But he always refuses to bless her,
Except when she takes the veil."

This little theory is, perhaps, more ingenious than strictly correct; but it accords well with the stern and lofty aspect of the Mönch, as he stands side by side with the serene and stately Jungfrau.

Our simple repast did not occupy much time; and after satisfying mine host, who, notwithstanding slowness both of hearing and speech, had contrived to learn the universally understood lesson of asking an extortionate price from the English travellers, we went forth to take in as much as possible of the surpassingly beautiful scene before us. The men were sitting idly about,

while the women worked; and they gazed on us with curiosity—explorers being still novelties. We found a quiet spot on a grassy slope, and maintained our silent, wondering gaze, until one of our party softly began the first notes of Mendelssohn's anthem, "Lift thine eyes unto the mountains," and one and another taking up the parts, the soft, swelling harmonies floated upwards into the vaulted arches of a cathedral meet to prolong the echoes of the song of praise. The villagers, to whom this style of music was a novelty, gathered round, and offered us flowers at the conclusion. A very simple, ignorant set they seemed—their only means of knowledge and improvement being, apparently, the occasional visit in summer, and, weather permitting, to the little church of Lauterbrunnen, in the Protestant canton of Berne.

The afternoon lights and shadows fell upon the mountains as we bade farewell to Mürren—the changing lights and shades which for century after century have flitted across the icy unchanging summits, while generations have lived and died beneath them. Half sadly, we prepared for our departure, giving last lingering looks at the lofty assembly, separated from us by the deep, narrow valley at the foot of the hill on which we stood.

We descended on foot by a different path from that which we had taken in ascending. The horses found their own way down in a manner marvellous to behold, while we congratulated ourselves that we were not on their backs, as the extraordinary gymnastic performances, which they seemed to regard as matters of the greatest ease, would have rendered the ride, to say the least of it, extremely unpleasant.

These pages have given but a feeble sketch of the glories of the view from the heights of Mürren. All I can say by way of conclusion may be summed up in a piece of friendly advice to the reader:—When you next go to Switzerland, make acquaintance for yourself with "The Highest Village in Europe."

EARL CANNING.

THE annals of English history have now been illustrated by two eminent statesmen of the name of Canning—father and son—both of whom rose early to distinction, and passed prematurely into the grave. The name has the credit of an ancient and honourable standing. At a very early period it was of note in Wiltshire, and in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the Cannings were distinguished as Members of Parliament, and Mayors of Bristol. In the middle of the fifteenth century one of them was Lord Mayor of London, and his son became William, Mayor of Bristol, subsequently a monk, then the dean of the priory of Westbury, and finally the re-founder of the church of St. Mary Redcliffe—famous in poetical story from association with the name of the "unfortunate boy" Chatterton. The principal line, still flourishing, has since been known as the Cannings of Foxcote, two branches of which—besides the branch of the recently deceased earl—are also ennobled, and are represented respectively by the present Lord Garvagh, and the present distinguished diplomatist Lord Stratford de Redcliffe.

The subject of this article was the third son of the celebrated orator and statesman, the Right Honourable George Canning, M.P., who, after a splendid political career, died in 1827, whilst Prime Minister of England. The mother of the Earl, recently dead, was Joan, daughter of Major-General John Scott, of Balcomie in the county of Fife, and heiress of Lamintoun, and through her



mother, Henrietta Baillie, heiress of Lamintoun, inherited the patriotic blood of Wallace. Mrs. Canning, on the decease of her illustrious husband, was raised to the peerage; but she preferred his name to the title by which the nation intended to perpetuate his memory. After her death the title descended to her son, who, although much esteemed for genius and talent among those with whom he associated, did not often take a part in public affairs. His father, the Right Honourable George Canning, during his lifetime lost his eldest son, George Charles, by death, in 1820; his second son, William Pitt Canning was in 1828 drowned whilst bathing at Madeira; the third and last son, Charles John Canning, after having attained considerable eminence as a statesman in this country, and as Governor-General of India during a most trying period, has but a short time ago passed away. He has left no issue, consequently the titles of this branch of the house of Canning become extinct.

There is a solemnity of feeling raised in our breasts, when we reflect on the many valuable lives India has cost us, especially such as have left no direct heirs to perpetuate their names. The Marquis of Dalhousie, a bold and daring man, was sent to India, and, as he said, from a stern necessity, and not by choice, greatly enlarged the boundaries of the empire. His marchioness, having too long braved the climate through affection

to her husband, died on her homeward voyage. The Marquis, after his return, was never able to take any part in public affairs. His energies had faded beneath the ardour of an Indian sun, and he died leaving no direct heir to his estates and title, which passed to his cousin, formerly Lord Panmure. Viscountess Canning died last November, at Calcutta, and was buried there, whilst her husband was on his farewell visit to the Upper Province. As the cloud-shadow of an autumnal day falls darkly upon the earth, so fell this calamity upon the heart of her husband; he came home a bereaved and a broken man, sorrowing and suffering, and, like the Marquis of Dalhousie, died without posterity.

The Right Honourable Sir Charles John Canning, Earl Canning, and Viscount Canning, of Kilbrahan, was born in 1812, at Brompton, and was sent to Eton, where his father before him had achieved classical honours. He completed his education at Christchurch, Oxford, where in 1833 he graduated as first class in classics and second in mathematics. His success at Oxford, coupled with his subsequent career as a statesman, were the causes of his being within the last few years elected to an honorary studentship of Christchurch, although he never took the degree of M.A. at his university. He commenced his political career in his twenty-fourth year, when, in 1836, he took his seat in the House of Commons, on the Conser-

vative side, as member for Warwick. In 1837 his mother died, and he succeeded to the title of viscount. In 1841 he became Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and in this office first discovered those powers of application, industry, business tact, and energy of which he was possessed. In the months of March, June, and July, 1846, he held the office of Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests, and supported the free trade measures of Sir Robert Peel. About this period his business habits brought him into various other commissionerships in connection with the fine arts, manufactures, and railways. On the dissolution of the Peel administration he went out of office, and held no particular appointment till 1852, when, on the formation of the administration of the Earl of Aberdeen, he received the Postmaster-Generalship, which he retained for upwards of three years, displaying more than ordinary official ability.

Viscount Canning had now worked himself up into political and administrative eminence in the eyes of his countrymen. He had fairly and honourably won his position, and merited not only marked notice, but high distinction. Accordingly, his political fortunes were now about to be tried in a still higher official situation than in that of the Postmaster-Generalship of this country.

In India, the constitution of the Earl of Dalhousie had broken down under the united effects of private grief and excess of labour. The first intelligence he had received of the death of his wife was from the newsboys shouting its announcement in the streets of Calcutta. The shock came upon him with such severity, that it seemed doubtful whether he himself should survive the fatigue of a voyage home, or whether he might not even die before the arrival of a successor. It was when the health of this resolute man was thus destroyed, that the home authorities decided to depose the King of Oude and annex his kingdom to the Indian empire. Lord Dalhousie, ready for his work in the darkest hour, immediately wrote to the Court of Directors, to say that if his services were required, he would annex the kingdom before quitting his post; and accordingly his last days in India were devoted to that work—a work which had no small effect in maturing the Sepoy rebellion.

As Dalhousie was about to return to his native country, the East India Company determined that Canning should succeed him as Governor-General of India. Accordingly, on the 4th of July, 1855, he received his nomination, which in a few days afterwards was confirmed by her Majesty in Council. On the 29th of February of the following year, he commenced his rule in India, and on the 6th of March Lord Dalhousie left Calcutta. The new Governor-General was met by the Sepoy mutiny, and, unanticipated as it was, he was found quite equal to the task of adopting such measures as ultimately effectually crushed that hydra-headed monster of the Indian empire. He was wise in his policy, and both stringent and humane in his measures. His political opponents accused him of sacrificing British interests through a maudlin humanity, and reproachfully called him "Clemency Canning;" but his clemency was ultimately destined to crown him with lasting honour. Mr. Russell, who had many opportunities of studying the character of Lord Canning during the prevalence of the mutiny, thus speaks of him in his "Diary in India:"—

"In this and subsequent conversation that evening, on the subject of the mutinies, the causes of them, the extent of the atrocities perpetrated by the Sepoys, the stories of mutilations and outrage, the Governor-General evinced a remarkable analytical power, an ability of investigation, a habit of appreciating and weighing evi-

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The assistants of Earl Canning in the suppression of this rebellion were such men as Lord Clyde, Havelock, Outram, the Lawrences, and many others whose heroic spirits have immortalized their names and embalmed their memories in the very core of their country's heart. The policy of the Governor-General was, under the favour of Providence, eminently successful; the mutiny was effectually suppressed, and peace, order, and acknowledged supremacy restored to the Indian empire.

The wisdom of "Clemency Canning" was now to meet its reward. On the 15th of April, 1859, the Earl of Derby in the Lords, and Lord Stanley in the Commons, moved and carried votes of thanks to Lord Canning for the eminent skill, courage, and perseverance displayed by him during the military operations by which the Indian insurrection was suppressed. On the 21st of May of the same year he was created a G.C.B., having previously received his earlship. By the change in the constitution of Indian rule, Earl Canning had, on the 1st of November, 1858, become Viceroy of India, and, as such, his administrative ability and eminent wisdom were as signally displayed as they had been during the trying period of the insurrection. On the 25th of June, 1861, he was appointed first Grand Master of the Star of India, and on his return home, in 1862, was created a Knight of the Garter and named Ranger of Greenwich Park. His career, however, was now shortly to end. His time had come. The hand of death was upon him, and on the 17th of June, 1862, he expired at his town house in Grosvenor Place. On the 21st his mortal remains were committed to the grave in Westminster Abbey. There, in that solemn receptacle of the "mighty dead," he sleeps at the foot of his father's statue, in the same grave at the head of which, thirty-five years ago, stood the orphan Eton boy, Charles John Canning, supported by the Dukes of Clarence and Sussex, and surrounded by numerous statesmen, among whom was Lord Palmerston, the present Premier of England.

In 1835 Earl Canning married Charlotte, elder daughter and co-heir—with her sister, the present Marchioness Dowager of Waterford—of the late Sir Charles Stuart, G.C.B., Baron Stuart de Rothsaye. He leaves surviving an only sister, Harriet, Marchioness of Clanricarde.*

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LEDESDALE GRANGE.

A TALE OF COAL-FIELDS AND CORN-FIELDS.

CHAPTER XX.—PROFESSOR WIRKWOOD'S CRITICISMS.

THE "Three Jolly Colliers," as they appeared depicted on the sign known to everybody about Ledesdale, and to a good many known rather too well, were very jovial fellows—boon companions indeed. Their beaming countenances quite threw into shade most of the faces which exhibited inside the house of entertainment, and which might frequently have been characterized as rather dark and moody physiognomies, with little of the stamp of gladness impressed upon them. A stirring mansion, truly, was that of the "Three Jolly Colliers;" no matter how bad the times were, there always seemed plenty of money waiting to flow into its coffers; no matter what works in the neighbourhood came to a stand-still, or shut up with a crash, this house of business went briskly on and flourishingly—flourishing on the "fools' pence" which unceasingly poured in. The landlord throve upon it too: indeed, so deep was the purple, so hilarious the expression of his countenance, that he might almost have sat for one of the three portraits on his own sign; and this joviality on his part made him a prodigious favourite with his customers, both male and female; they all said, what "good company John Strong always was;" and as some of them ruined themselves in his service, it was evident that their appreciation went deeper than mere words.

Monday was a great day for the landlord and his house; the general holiday of the district, and a day when people were usually pretty flush of coin—was it not natural that they should come and lay it out in his comfortable quarters? Many of them, it is true, went home beggared and penniless; but that was certainly their lookout and not John Strong's. Another fact, too, much in his favour, was an occasional practice of paying the colliers at a publichouse. Some of the butties kept beer-shops themselves; and woe betide the men who worked under those butties; woe betide their wives and families; woe betide some of those butties themselves hereafter, when a heavier reckoning than between them and their workmen is called for. Mr. Strong was not a butty himself, but he was in the confidence of one, and made a good thing of it occasionally, he and his friend proving mutual accommodations to each other. There were a good many more than three colliers, jolly or otherwise, occupying Mr. Strong's reception-room on the night following that of Professor Wirkwood's lecture. Not a bad sitting-room that, by any means; a very agreeable contrast it offered to some of their own homes, with its clean sanded floor and well scoured tables ranged in rows the whole length of the spacious apartment. The bright fire that burned on that hearth whenever the weather could at all offer an excuse for one, was a powerful attraction in itself, without at all taking into account the bright pewter pots and their contents, the large goblet glasses and their contents, of which there was never any lack, be the weather what it might. Then, to those who had at all an artist's eye, or a taste for field sports developed in any measure, the pictures hung round the room were sources of unfailing interest. Those noble steeds, in every imaginable attitude, those gallant huntsmen, in every possible and impossible position of peril and heroic daring, offered many a theme for thought and conversation. "Before the Leap," and "After the Leap," were special favourites, though the fate of the too venturesome leaper was a melancholy one.

But neither huntsmen nor horses seemed to have much engrossing power on the night in question; their

bright colours were disregarded, and the untimely fate of one of them unmourned for. The men assembled were talking earnestly together, discontentedly rather—in short, grumbling; and the more they grumbled the more they felt it necessary to wash down their grumbling with the contents of the pewter pots, for it is proverbially a husky business and a dry one.

Some of Mr. Purden's men were of the number; but there was not a voice there raised against him. He might occasionally be rather a cross husband—even at times the reverse of a pleasant companion or friend—but as a master his conduct was unimpeachable. There was something in his frank hearty bearing with his men that won their hearts instantaneously, while his real care for them was evinced where any were disabled by sickness or any of the accidents so attendant on their occupations. Then he had grown up among them: how many remembered him as "the young master," long before his father's death had left him in possession of the works and collieries! All these things made Mr. Purden very popular among his workmen; but not so his well-beloved butty and humble counsellor David Judson.

"Wum yer at lecture other night, Billy?" inquired a heavy low-browed man, who looked as though he had drunk too much before he well began.

"Wot, on 'arths and 'arts?" was the reply; "no, but my boy Tom war, and seemed to enjoy hisself uncommon."

"I heered say as how lecturer giv' it all right and left, and kep' nowt for hisself; it's the way with them folks as lives by their tongues; they always make out as if they be the only white sheep o' the flock."

"You wouldn't have the man stand up and blacken his own character, would you?" asked a shrewd-looking little man with merry black eyes that twinkled when he spoke.

"No, nor other folk's either," said his heavy-looking neighbour.

"Now, I'll tell you how it is," continued the merry-eyed man; "I wer' there, and took in all the man said—gentleman, I should say, for he looked one every bit, if he wer' somewhat lusty—and I went with him all the way, except on one point; and when he began to talk against Sabbath workers and what not, thinks I to myself, 'My fine fellow, go say all that to the masters, and see how they take it in; for,' thinks I again, 'taint likely men 'ull go out their own throats and get turned off to starvation as long as masters can put other men in their places who'll do their business Sunday or weekday; taint nat'ral, is it?'"

"I should say it warn't, neither, and a thing as shouldn't be asked for; if there's any Sabbath breaking in the business, it's masters does it."

"I wonder how it 'ull all fall out at the last, when every man's judged by his own doings?" said a voice from another table, of a tone so gentle that it sounded like a woman's.

"What! mild Steenie Parker, you hero to-night! Giving conscience another slap in the face, eh, my lad?" and the speaker laughed, as if a violation of conscience, with all its fearful train of results, were indeed a theme for jesting. The man called Steenie flushed up to the roots of his hair, and seemed able to make no reply.

"I tell you what," said another, "I could specify a good few others nor such as we, as might 'av' bin to speechifying and dun them no harm neither."

"Ay, Dick, when mon came out wi' anning a penny in pocket after paying the damage, I thowt of some I could name who aint particklar about the payment, wi' penny or wi'out penny."

Such boisterous merriment followed this expression of sentiment, that the landlord made his appearance in the room to see that all was going on smoothly.

"Glad to see you so merry to-night, gentlemen; hope I see you pretty well, Mr. Parker; 'tisn't often you do me the honour, sir; I don't see what you are drinking, though, Mr. Parker."

"We'm not mentioning no names, Jacky Strong," interposed the last speaker, "but just remarking that 'taint all as makes a shine 'as much to show for it."

Mr. Strong looking slightly mystified at this profound observation, had to be enlightened as to its antecedents.

"I'm of one mind with yourselves, gentlemen," he said then, "and I know one big man down at a big house yonder, who put his name down on a charity list last week for fifty pounds, and who may be in the court to-morrow, if they care to put him there."

"Ay, ay, it's easy giving fifty pun' as come out of other folk's purses; but I say be just before yer generous; baint that good morality, Steenie Parker?"

"Very," said Steenie, so earnestly that he might have been wondering if the present company were "just," either to themselves or other people.

"Ned," said the little man with merry eyes, "did you see Judson with master this morning?"

"Ah, I did," was the reply, "and wished I knowed his business wi' him, that I might help settle it."

"I've worked three year successfully" (commonly supposed that *successively* was intended) "under that 'ere gaffer, and never knowed no good on him yet."

"Nor no one else either, I should say," was Ned's reply. "It's my belief that there aint no good in him to know, for all he and Master Purdon bin so precious thick; that brother of your'n know'd a little too much on him, Billy."

Billy's face grew wrathful at the reminiscence. "That wer' the wickedest, unmanliest, inhumanest sort of a trick as was ever played," he answered vehemently.

"What war it, Billy? out wi' it, mon, and wash down thine anger meantime wi' Jackey Strong's good four-penny."

"Well, you all know, leastways some of this good company does, my poor brother Sampson, as died last Shrovetide. He war fellow butty with Davy Judson when both worked under Master Hardcastle, and though he couldn't never abide his ways, it never came to words between 'em. Well, presently he thought he'd stand it no longer, and giv' up partnership. He made all square with Judson; but like a great block of a chap—poor Sampson, he's dead and gone now—he never giv public notice of the desolation. So what does Judson do but, like a big thief, sends men for brother's share o' wages, and when of course he ain't got 'em, cos Judson has all hisself, they put him into court, and all his furniture gets took from under him."

"And couldn't he get address from the master?" inquired one of the men.

"No; master knew nowt of the ins and outs of it. I don't think he liked Judson ever after, but he couldn't be proved guilty, so he made a rare business of it."

"Well, Master Purden thinks a fine deal on him now; but his turn 'ull come one o' these days; 'taint such as he thrives for ever."

The men's faces, while this conversation was in progress, were worth perusing. By no means a handsome set, and far removed from being a clean set, or a well-attired set, there was about them, with one or two exceptions, a look of shrewdness and intelligence not always to be met with among the English working classes. In commonly respectable clothing, and after a

judicious appliance of soap and razor, they would have been denominated a fine looking set of men. They were in the heat of a further discussion respecting Judson and his demerits, when the door opened, and a man's face peeped in. Steenie Parker drew back, and tried to hide himself from observation. A great stamping and clapping of hands greeted this man's appearance.

"Wonders won't never have done ceasing," cried out the man who had related his brother's grievance. "Come in, Stirling, and help us make a night on it; we'll all stand treat—won't we, lads?"

"Yes, yes," was the universal cry. "Come, Jacky Strong, help heave in Bob Stirling."

But he stood resolutely, with one foot outside the door, preventing his being forcibly shut in. "No," he said, "you don't think so bad of me as all that comes to; I came to know which of you are tired wasting your money and your time, and will come with me to a better place of entertainment."

"Holloa!" said the landlord, waxing wrathful, "I've borne a good two or three insults from you, Bob Stirling, but I won't have my customers took off on false pretences, mind ye."

"No, no, don't mind him, Jacky, we ain't a-going; what's the bill of fare, Bob?"

"Come and taste it," was the answer; "it's what you *must* either taste soon, or thirst for everlastingly when you can never have it."

"Bah!" said one of them, "I hate methodism and preachifyings; a short life and a merry one, say I. Those may go who like it, but I stay here."

"You'll come, Steenie Parker?" said the Scripture Reader, for such he was.

Poor Steenie, abashed at being detected, but not sorry to make his escape, rose up, with a look at his companions apparently deprecating their ridicule, and went with Stirling. He was the only one of the party who could be induced to leave the "Three Jolly Colliers" till the night was far on the wane, and the faculties of the company were even more so.

CHAPTER XXI.

A SOUND of alarm in the distance—danger scented afar off—a vague dread of coming evil—brought the autumn of 18—to Ledesdale and the surrounding district. Nor to that part of England only, for through the length and breadth of the land spread rapidly the fearful tidings that cholera, that scourge of God, might shortly be expected. Cholera was an old foe at Ledesdale; very deadly missiles had there been launched, when the year '32 first saw it in true Asiatic form stalk through the country. Very dire havoc had attended its course throughout the mining district—townships prostrated before it; families, as one man, cut off, and all "hearts failing" because of it. For it was the bearer of an awful message from on high—a sudden and relentless summons to prepare for a reckoning which many, in the madness of their hearts, had still believed far off. Once, since then, had it appeared on our shores, and now report affirmed that it was hovering round us, and ready to begin its deadly work again. Was England, were the people of the mining district, ready for it? It was not the fault of newspapers if they were not; not the fault of Lords and Commons, Doctors and Commissioners, who joined in devising schemes whereby this monster might be strangled in its infancy, but who showed, with all their high decrees, their impotency in the matter. Some one came down to Trayton, expressly sent to investigate, make reports, and effect no end of sanitary reforms; but, somehow, after a great fuss, and an ideal

revolution on a grand scale, with respect to house grievances, and street grievances, and drain grievances—affairs, grievances included, continued pretty much in *statu quo*.

Now, if the cholera could have been given a choice of locality, if it could have named the spot peculiarly adapted to its taste, and fitted for its sphere of action, it must surely have fixed unhesitatingly on that very locality, so ignorant of its surest defence. For cholera, unlike most other travellers, seeks out in its rambles the dark and miserable, the close and squalid dwelling-places, and makes its lodging there. Wherever you can find long streets of houses huddled close on one another, gutters before front doors, and heaps of rotten vegetables at the back; bedrooms with windows that won't open, and dwelling rooms with corners that won't bear inspection; single rooms doing duty for many people, and soap and water doing duty for few, you may expect with confidence that cholera will look in on its rounds and find itself at home there.

Mr. Rivers, from his quiet country residences, had read and heard of the ravages committed by that ruthless visitant, and had quaked as he read. Now that it seemed no longer a distant object, but knocking as it were at the very door, he felt it time to stir himself, and looked around for signs of that anxious preparation which might naturally have been expected, but which were far from being very obvious.

"You hardly remember the first visitation of cholera, I should imagine," Mr. Rivers remarked one day to an intelligent shopkeeper at Trayton.

"Oh, but I do, though," was the answer; "tain't a sort of event likely to be soon forgot; 'twas the turning upside down of our poor town."

"Well, it was a warning not likely to be soon forgotten either, I hope; and I daresay the improvements in the town are very great since then."

"Oh yes, sir, yes, very great; we've—we've had wash-houses and baths since that time."

"Well, I don't know anything that cholera likes much less than that; but the houses in the back streets—what of them? It's not the pleasantest sort of navigation, sometimes, among your by-ways."

The man shrugged his shoulders. "I suppose they'll be doing something in that line, now that all the folks are catching fright about it; but I doubt no reforms of that 'ere 'ull stand test of time. It's the nature of some folks to grub, and grub they must."

His companion could not help laughing at that. "I think it's rather the habit than the nature," he said; "and I've known people who've 'grubbed' half their lifetime, leave it off at last, and strike out a new line with great satisfaction. I think some of our friends in these courts and alleys might be induced to see the advantage of such a course, if they could be taken in hand a little systematically."

The man shrugged his shoulders again, and remarked that "it was hard making silk purses out of certain articles;" and as Mr. Rivers had observed that people who are fond of shrugging their shoulders are not those who often "put them to the wheel," he said no more to him. But a day or two afterwards he was walking through his own parish, and, having olfactory nerves rather easily affected, he could not forbear pausing opposite a foul mass of vegetable and other remnants, and addressing a woman who seemed active in its rearing up: "Don't you think, now, my friend, it would be wise to do away with that pest-heap before it helps to make away with you, or some of your family? If the cholera comes among us, as we have every reason

to suppose it shortly will, that mess out there is just an invitation to it to pay your house a special visit."

"I hope not, sir, indeed," was the reply; "and I humbly trust it won't be coming this away; but we be in the Lord's hands, and mun bide we time."

Now that was a sort of speech that made Mr. Rivers feel very angry; he knew this woman to be one who, from one week's end to another, practically forgot her Maker and transgressed his laws; yet she could talk as coolly of his preserving power as if it was the constant object of her solicitude; but he answered her gently, nevertheless. "We cannot expect God will protect us where we ourselves court the danger: I tell you that heap, and such as that, and these nasty standing pools of water, and these dirty houses, are all as so many voices screaming to the cholera, or any other pestilence that may be sent among us, to 'come this way—don't overlook us—stay as long as you can.' It's no laughing matter, I assure you," as the woman seemed rather amused than otherwise at the idea.

"Well, it baint, and that's a certain thing; for when the colery was here last, we had three down in it, and two as died; but I should think it never could take no more on we."

"That, indeed," said the clergyman, solemnly, "is more than any of us dare say. Ask God to prepare you for it, if it should please him to send it again; and then try and guard against it in the proper manner. I am speaking," he continued to some of the neighbours who had gathered round, "of these dreadful nuisances which are likely enough to be the death of many of you if they are suffered to remain."

He talked a good deal more to the same effect, and, apparently, to little enough purpose. The spirit of fatalism, in its practical, if not its theoretical form, is largely developed among our poorer classes, and fraternizes so well with the spirit of indolence, that the duplicate evil is hard to contend with, and requires wary dealing.

"To fear the worst oft cures the worst," said Mr. Marriott, when he had listened some time to Mr. Rivers' account of fears and perplexities on this head; "I am rather hopeful that the pestilence may not come among us in its aggravated form after all; but, in the meantime, all the precautionary measures taken now, will, whether or no, not be lost upon us."

"It's so difficult to know where to begin," was the reply; "a most discouraging place, certainly, in which to attempt sanitary reform, or any other, indeed; most discouraging!"

"That's a long word," said Mr. Marriott, laughing, "that I try to banish from my vocabulary; for, if once admitted, it is always obtruding itself. I try to think that where a case looks 'discouraging' superficially, it's carrying an invitation to look a little deeper, and see if there is not something which renders it quite the contrary after all, and I generally find there is."

"You are of a sanguine nature, I perceive," said Mr. Rivers; which question was waived for the time being, and the iron-master proceeded to interest his companion in an account of measures he was taking among his own work-people and others, with whom he had much influence, to guard against contingent evil. The energy and prompt decision evidently displayed by him in this, as in most other matters, almost amused his listener, whose forte was certainly neither decision nor energy, though he could well appreciate the qualities in others. The death of his favourite son (and Mr. Marriott owned with shame that he had well nigh made an idol of him), so far from having had a deadening or stupefying in-

fluence upon him, would seem to have wakened him into new life and activity. In the words of his workmen, "Master Marriott ever was the best man goin', and now he's wolely beat his sem." He appeared, in the terrible trial that had befallen him, to hear the gentle warning, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee," and to act upon it: for sin it would have seemed to him, had he avoided doing heartily, and with all his might, whatever lay in his power for the good of those about him. Mr. Rivers felt himself growing hopeful and vigorous while he conversed with him; and his parish, which a few minutes before had stretched before him as a sort of Slough of Despond, now appeared offering a field for exertion highly encouraging and stimulating. So true it is that "a man's countenance sharpeneth his friend, as iron sharpeneth iron." "We'll lay our heads together," were Mr. Marriott's parting words on the subject, "and come out as a strong anti-choleraic potion; very bitter indeed to those who won't take us as they ought to do, but highly beneficial in our general results. Good-bye. By the way, you have heard, I suppose, that one of my children is about to run away from me in a week or two?"

Reader, did you ever feel a sensation in your throat as if an egg had suddenly risen up in it, shell and all, and stuck there? To save his life, Mr. Rivers felt as if he could not have asked an explanation of this speech; so, regardless of appearances, he turned away with merely a hasty bow, and some inaudible lip muttering.

"Going to lose one of my children!" When quietly seated again in his study the words would recall themselves. "Perhaps the father alluded to that young Leighton Marriott, whose commission in the army had some time been pending. Yes, it was evidently that he meant: to suppose the other thing would simply be ridiculous. He would call and wish young Leighton joy." Mr. Rivers knew very little about Master Leighton—care, perhaps, still less; that considered, it was wonderful how the subject dwelt in his mind that evening, to the banishment even of cholera and his proposed reforms; and that he should ever and anon have murmured to himself the simple words, "One of my children is about to run away from me."

GOOD OLD TIMES.

How would you like to have lived in England when it was half forest and half swamp; when houses were built without chimneys and windows put in without glass; when clothing was rough and scanty; when a dearth or famine took place about every ten years, varied by occasional plagues and pestilence? Such were "the good old times," which have been well described as miserable, compared with our own; when the luxury of a linen shirt was confined to the rich; when ploughmen fed on gruel, though maids of honour had beer and beefsteaks for breakfast; and when hundreds of able-bodied vagabonds wandered about the country, living by theft and plunder.

Perhaps you will say that this carries us too far back into our history; so let us look at our dear old country only a century ago, and see what was its condition at that time. I shall divide what I have to say into three parts.

I. PHYSICAL CONDITION.

Every one who knows anything of sanitary science, must be aware of the intimate connection which subsists between national health and the proper supply of food, clothing, and well-arranged dwellings. Let a town be overcrowded, three or four families living in small houses only large enough for one; let these families, breathing

a vitiated air, be clothed during inclement seasons with thin and insufficient garments; let them have badly drained streets, an insufficient supply of water, and a short supply of bread and meat, being forced to live, for the most part, on vegetables or other cheap kinds of food. What would be their physical condition? Places like these are the seed-plots of disease and death.

It may be well, therefore, to inquire whether there has been any change for the better in regard to these things during the last hundred years. What about food, for instance? The improvement is surprising; especially since the repeal of the corn laws. In the year 1760, there were 880,000 poor persons who lived upon rye bread instead of wheaten. Yet that was at a time when the population of England had only reached 6,000,000; so that 14 per cent. of the whole nation then lived on rye, whereas now, the cultivation of rye is almost unknown, except in the county of Durham, where a mixture of wheat and rye, called *maslin*, is found. The same may be said in regard to the consumption of barley. Wheat now forms the almost universal bread of England; and in most of the manufacturing towns, since the repeal of the corn laws, the use of the inferior sorts of wheaten bread has been rejected by all but the poorest classes.

A glance at the increase in the consumption of butcher's meat will furnish us with quite as gratifying an evidence of the growing improvement of our labouring population. Take a few facts connected with London, for example. During the ten years ending 1750, there were, on an average, about 74,000 head of cattle, and about 570,000 head of sheep, sold annually in Smithfield market. Compare this with an average of the three years ending 1841, when 175,000 head of cattle, and 1,347,447 head of sheep were annually sold in Smithfield. Thus the increase was in the ratio of about 136 per cent. on each. Meanwhile, how was the population increasing? At the first period, 1750, the metropolis held about 670,000 persons; whereas, in 1841, the last period, it contained 1,690,084; the increase then being in the ratio of about 150 per cent. It consequently appears that the number of cattle and sheep consumed in London increased, between 1750 and 1841, in a proportion very little less than the population; showing of necessity a great increase in the consumption throughout the mass of the inhabitants. Another element should be added to this consideration, viz. the weight of the animals, which more than doubled during the interval. In the earlier part of last century, the nett weight of cattle sold at Smithfield did not, on an average, exceed 370lbs., and that of the sheep 28lbs.; whereas, in 1841, the average weight of cattle was estimated at about 800lbs., and that of the sheep at about 80lbs. Hence, on a moderate computation, the consumption of butcher's meat in London, as compared with the population, was in 1841 more than twice as great as in 1750.* And if the same calculations were made for the following twenty years ending 1861, there can be no doubt that the same results or even greater would be obtained.

From food we pass to clothing. The improvement under this branch of our inquiry is more marked than the former. Owing to the wonderful cheapness of cotton goods, the working classes have as great a means of neatness, and even gaiety of dress, as the middle and upper classes of last century. This can very easily be understood, by the rapid increase in the productions of our cotton manufacture. The first bag of cotton imported from America was brought to Liverpool in 1785, when it was seized by the Custom House officers as not being the

* MacCulloch's "British Empire," vol. ii. p. 515.

real produce of the United States. Up to last year, between 2,000,000 and 3,000,000 bales of cotton were annually imported, while the annual value of our cotton manufactures exported was about £30,000,000, and, but for the miserable revolution devastating the United States, would no doubt go on still more rapidly increasing. The result is, that a labouring man may buy at a retail shop, a neat and good print as low as 4d. per yard; so that, allowing seven yards for the dress, the whole material shall only cost 2s. 4d. Common plain calico may be bought for 2½d. per yard; elegant cotton prints sell at from 10d. to 1s. 4d. per yard; and printed muslins at from 1s. to 4s., the higher priced having beautiful patterns, in brilliant and permanent colours. Thus, a country wake in the nineteenth century may display as much finery as a drawing-room of the eighteenth; and the peasant's cottage may at this day have as handsome furniture for beds, windows, and tables, as the house of a substantial tradesman sixty years since.*

A few words next about the dwelling-houses of the poor. Surely any man who visits our older towns, or the more ancient lanes and streets which remain of them, and compares them, generally, with our modern streets, must be struck with the difference, especially in regard to drainage, which is, after all, one of the greatest insurances against epidemic disease. Until within a comparatively late period, good sewers scarcely existed in some large towns. Now, however, owing to better municipal enactments, good sewerage is becoming general. In Wigan, Lancashire, cottages can be drained at a first cost, complete, of about 27s. each. In Alnwick, every single house is properly drained. In Carlisle, the main outlet sewers will serve for three times its present population. There is no doubt much remaining to be done. In most of our larger towns there are still many unnaturally overcrowded dwellings, baneful alike both to health and morals. But the pleasure of our retrospect is, that where these evils existed fifty years ago unnoticed, they are at present a subject of anxious concern, and are often remedied by the efforts of rich and good men, many of whom are doing all they can to provide for the working man's comfort. Who will not immediately recall the princely donation of Mr. George Peabody, to the amount of £150,000, for the benefit of the poor in London; the whole of which is to be set aside, I believe, for the improvement of their dwelling-houses. I may mention, however, other deeds of munificence, not, perhaps, so widely known. The Duke of Northumberland has lately built 1379 cottages for the labourers on his estates, all of one story high, dry, well drained, and ventilated, at a total outlay of £38,950. The Earl Spencer has also, within the last ten years, erected eighty-seven new cottages, at a cost of £190 each, besides substantially repairing 143 others; the outlay between the two amounting to £18,000. The late Duke of Bedford, with the same lofty views of his public duty, built, not long since, 566 cottages, viz: 282 in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, 190 in Devonshire and Cornwall, 72 in Cambridgeshire and Northampton, and 22 in Dorsetshire. All these had an abundant quantity of hard and soft water provided for them, and every attention was paid to drainage, sewage, ventilation, light, and aspect.† Would that the same high sense of responsibility animated every landed proprietor throughout the country.

Among other things calculated to benefit the dwellings of the working classes, the late Public Health Act may be mentioned, stimulating as it has, all kinds of useful

sanitary arrangements. By the application of this Act to the town of Evesham, a great reduction has been made in the rate of the annual mortality, which now stands there at about seventeen in 1000, being below the average of many rural districts. The late sanitary arrangements in Liverpool have saved many thousands of lives; the preventible mortality in this country being something like 90,000 of the population per annum.

II. SOCIAL CONDITION.

We may look at this in a variety of ways. One measurement of progress consists in the gradual elevation of the working class above poverty and pauperism, which can be abundantly shown. Take, for instance, the following fact. In 1801, when the population of the country was 8,872,980, the sum expended in the relief of the poor was £4,017,871; whereas, in 1844, when the population was 16,601,975, having nearly doubled itself, the sum expended was almost the same, being only £4,976,093. Or, putting it in another way: between the years 1824 and 1834, £70,296,844 were expended in the relief of the poor; whereas, between 1835 and 1845, only £52,292,515. So that while the population was rapidly increasing, the corresponding poverty steadily decreased, to the saving of £18,004,329. And if it be asked what the case has been during the last seventeen years, I reply, that there has been the same steady decrease in the number of paupers relieved. For instance, between 1849, as compared with 1860, neither of which were exceptional years, there was a decrease of 22·4 per cent. paupers of all classes, whereas the decrease in regard to able-bodied paupers was 42·3.*

One of the most satisfactory causes of this diminished poverty is the increased value of labour, consequent on improvements in machinery and discoveries in chemistry, and the removal of restrictions on trade. Thus, at Manchester, in 1810, when corn was at £4 11s. 11d. per quarter, a carpenter earned 25s. a week; in 1840, when corn was at £3 6s. 4d. the quarter, the same description of workman earned 30s. a week. Again, in 1832, when corn was at £2 18s. 8d., a mason could earn only 18s.; while in 1845, when corn was at £2 10s. 10d. he earned 27s. And this rate of wages has been steadily maintained.

Another extremely interesting cause of this diminished poverty, is an increased habit of forethought and providence among our working classes.

Take savings banks for example. In 1836, there were only 599,326 depositors in the kingdom; whereas the number is now probably four times as great, and will be still more increased by the Post Office savings banks. Or, better still, take the more recent institution of Penny Banks, which admit depositors of the poorest description. It was stated in 1851, that the Birmingham Penny Bank had 15,000 open accounts, one half of which had balances under one shilling. Of the penny banks in Derby, the Rev. Mr. Clark once said, "I have had fathers come to enter half-a-dozen children, and children come to enter their parents. I have had men who never saved a shilling in their lives before, finding they could save 10s. a week."

Surely this is true social elevation. And yet higher symptoms of it appear to me to be discoverable. I would notice, for instance, the existence of more kindly relationships between the employers and employed than formerly. When Arkwright's spinning jenny was first introduced, the mill-owners were so absorbed in opening out new sources of wealth, that they neglected to guard against the evils which resulted from this sudden development of production labour. They had large numbers of

* Baine's "History of the Cotton Manufacture," p. 358.

† Taken from papers read at the Social Science Congress, 1858.

* Thirteenth Annual Report of the Poor Law Board, 1860-61.

workmen, with abundant work and high wages; but they were treated as mere hirelings. Both they and their children were taxed to the utmost of their physical strength, until many of them died prematurely from excessive toil. The result of all this was seen in a fearful rupture of the social ties. Capital and labour were looked upon as essentially antagonistic in their interests. The masters and men had little or no sympathy with each other. Everything threatened a serious domestic revolution. But what an improved state of things now! Owing to the persevering efforts of the present Earl of Shaftesbury, then Lord Ashley, the celebrated Ten Hours Bill was passed in 1847. This spark of philanthropy was caught from breast to breast, and now, thank God, it burns brightly in a hundred separate centres. Witness the efforts used by many of the largest mill-owners and manufacturers to render their workmen happy, and convince them that their interests are one. I am only mentioning a single instance in the following; and deeply interesting would it be, if similar cases could be collected together and published. At Akroyd's worsted works in Yorkshire, as many of the workpeople are not resident in the village, a large dining-room has been built capable of holding 700 people, presided over by a cook and assistants, and superintended by a committee of workmen; attached to which is both a library and news-room. To increase the comfort of their workpeople, this firm have portioned out allotment gardens, they give prizes for flowers, support a band of music, and promote out-door sports and athletic games; besides which, there is a sick and funeral club, and a chaplain who resides in the midst of the people. As I have said just now, many other cases might be adduced of a similar nature; and the greater their number the greater the proof of social elevation among our British workmen. Thus, at one of the Social Science Congress meetings Mr. Robert Hanbury, junior, M.P. said: "Three years ago we adopted the plan of giving the men in our employ a half-holiday on Saturdays. It is regarded by them as one of the greatest boons ever presented by master to man. They avail themselves of the opportunity for rest and recreation, and are frequently seen enjoying the fresh air in Epping Forest. Our men are decidedly improved. We get better servants, and the work is done more heartily."

Another symptom of improvement in the same direction is the opening of parks and public places of recreation for the masses in all our larger towns, and presented either through private liberality or that of their municipal corporations. No one can have witnessed the throngs of labouring people, with their wives and children, enjoying these parks on a Saturday afternoon, without rejoicing in the happy sight. In Manchester there are no less than three of them, each furnished with gymnasiums and places for refreshment, and two of them with museums of a high order of merit. Birmingham, Leeds, London, etc., all partake, more or less, of the same advantages. Facts like these are surely most encouraging. Very much more, of course, remains to be worked out by Christian philanthropy; but meanwhile, let our working classes see for themselves that their social condition is one of gradual elevation.

III. MENTAL AND MORAL CONDITION.

Let us compare this with what it used to be. So recently as 1831 the late Rev. Sidney Smith said, "If men had made no more progress in the common arts of life than they have in education, we should at this moment be dividing our food with our fingers, and drinking out of the palms of our hands." Why, a hundred years

ago the majority of our working people could neither read nor write. How education was conducted before the system introduced by the "Government Minute of 1846," may be well seen by the report of an agent belonging to the Manchester Statistical Society, in 1836, when he paid a visit of inspection to the schools of Liverpool. In one school he represents forty children in the compass of 10 feet by 9. On a perch, forming a triangle with the corner of the room, sat a cock and two hens. Under a stump bed was a dog-kennel, occupied by three black terriers, whose barking, added to the noise of the children and the cackling of fowls, was almost deafening. On observing to his conductor, that this could "surely not be a type of all the schools in the neighbourhood," he was led to several others of a like kind—one in a room of 9 feet by 12, where there were thirty-eight scholars, not more than six of whom had any books; and where the atmosphere was offensive in the extreme; another down in a cellar, the steps into which were only fifteen inches wide, and covered with filth, where the forms were composed of four old bed-stocks resting on bricks, and the writing-desk a three-legged stool, accommodating only one scholar at a time. Frequently he found the mistress of a dame school gone out for the day. Once he found the children of a common day school playing in a garret by themselves, because the master was out drinking. In the great majority of schools there was no order or system, while a deficiency in light and ventilation was common to them all.*

It is difficult to over-estimate the improvement in education during the last twenty years, after reading accounts like these. Evidences of this improvement are not only discernible in our better-built school-rooms, and more effective tuition, but in the gradual extension of intelligence, as displayed by the general appreciation of good cheap literature, of mechanics' institutes, free libraries, working men's evening classes, etc. A volume might be written on this subject; space, however, forbids that I should enlarge upon it here. I would only just point out the effect of the "penny postage system" as incidentally illustrating the same thing. Thus, three or four years after the cheap postage had been established, the number of letters in the Shetland Isles had increased thirteen fold, fathers and mothers being no longer averse to their sons seeking profitable employment away from them. In the very first year after the change (1840) there was a national increase of 123 per cent. over the number of letters posted the year before. Facts like these ought to be widely known and circulated, and especially by the labouring classes, whose social elevation they so vividly portray. And what is true of their education is, in the main, true of their morals.

A century ago, indecency, brutality, drunkenness, and coarseness of manners were everywhere prevalent. At that time the people's amusements in Tottenham Court Road and Longfields consisted in the frequenting of large ponds, where they practised the cruel sport of duck-hunting and badger-baiting. They would throw a cat into the water and set dogs at her, and commit other horrible atrocities. The ballads which were openly sung about the streets could not be described; so infamous licentious were they, that it would now be against law even to sell them secretly.

In regard to drinking, again, I am convinced that, notwithstanding all we have still to deplore, things are very much better than they used to be. In the year

* "Papers for the Schoolmaster," vol. i. p. 60.

1744 the number of men and women rolling drunk about the streets was so enormous that it formed the subject of debates in Parliament. In 1742 there were 19,000,000 gallons of *spirituous liquors* consumed in England and Wales, which, taking the population at that time as 6,000,000, gives the average of above three gallons annually to every individual! A statement like this may appear incredible; I therefore merely remark that it was fairly and fully tested, and given in evidence before a committee of the House of Commons in 1743.

Can we question for a moment, after reading facts like these—and a thousand more might easily be accumulated—that the working classes of this country have now a much higher tone of morality than they formerly had? All classes of society have risen to a higher level; and I believe that, in proportion, the working classes have quite kept pace with the rest, even if they have not outstripped them. We see it in their popular amusements, which, so far from being generally debased, are increasingly becoming more refined and moral. It is true we have still a great deal to deplore in many of our lower popular amusements; but are there not corresponding sources of regret in connection with those of the higher classes of society also? Let us deal fairly with each, and be thankful that, upon the whole, both are changing for the better. The strongest testimony, however, in favour of a more elevated tone of morality which the working classes of this country can produce, is their increasing power of patient self-control under circumstances of extreme difficulty and depression. The conduct of all orders and ranks of workmen, for instance, now thrown out of employment in Lancashire, is beyond praise. Twenty or thirty years ago, a similar state of affairs would have produced the most violent demonstrations of public discontent. Mills would, probably, have been attacked, and the bakers' shops robbed. Processions of hungry men would have paraded the principal roads, and demanded food of the inhabitants with threatening of violence. Such proceedings are almost necessarily incidental to a populace which is only partly civilized and educated. The absence of such events, therefore, is the best testimony we can bring forward to the social and moral elevation of our workpeople.

I turn, then, to my friends among the labouring classes, and ask them if they are not thankful that their lot has been cast in the present days. I want them to feel that they have a thousand elements of happiness, of which their forefathers knew nothing. But let them remember that they are in proportion responsible. On this point, however, as well as on the former, there seems to me to be abundant cause for hope, inasmuch as the religious condition of the working classes, though less progressive than their social or moral condition, is, upon the whole, advancing rather than retrograding. There never was a time when such Christian effort was at work among them. Scripture readers and city or town missionaries everywhere traverse our streets. Pastoral visitation is on all hands extending. Preaching in the street, the tent, the school, the lecture-hall, and the theatre, is gradually bringing home the gospel to every door. Ragged schools, fathers' and mothers' meetings, Bible women, etc., all attest that the national conscience is alive to the spiritual necessities of the people. Under these circumstances he is faithless who does not hope for the future. Only let us be all united and filled with brotherly love, each man mutually helping the other, and each true Christian praying for his neighbourhood; we may then trust in the Lord's blessing, and humbly prophecy that religion as well as morals shall yet take deeper root in the soil of dear old England.

Varieties.

CAPTAIN COOK'S SHIP THE "RESOLUTION."—In "The Leisure Hour," No. 554, in an article on "Notable Ships," the following sentence occurs:—"What became of the 'Resolution' (Captain Cook's ship) we have no record at hand to show." Referring to Butler's "Chronology," under the date April 4th, 1851, I find the following:—"It must excite the indignation of every true-born Englishman to learn that the 'Resolution,' the ship in which the immortal Cook sailed round the world, was transformed into a smuggling whaler, under the colours of France." The fact is asserted in Barrow's "Voyage to Cochín China."—J. W. B.

POSTAGE-STAMP ALBUM.—A popular amusement amongst young ladies for some time past has been the collection of foreign postage-stamps. An album has been published containing a description of every known variety of *timbre poste*, so that a partially obliterated stamp may easily be recognised, and on the page opposite the description are spaces for mounting the stamps described, so that any collector may, at a glance, see all his deficiencies. We fear that there are not many persons who have succeeded in collecting all; for we find that above 1100 varieties have spaces allotted them, and there are also some blank leaves at the end for any that are not included. Two maps are also given.—*The Bookseller*.

DIVING-BELLS CAUSING DEAFNESS.—I write to corroborate the statement of your correspondent J. M. P. in "The Leisure Hour," p. 464. On the 12th July, 1852, I descended in the diving-bell at the Polytechnic. I felt considerable pressure on both ears, and slight pain at the time; and a few days after noticed that I was deaf in one ear, which deafness has continued to the present moment.—J. S.

BALLOON EXPERIMENTS.—Mr Glaisher, of the Royal Observatory, meteorological department, has recently made several ascents for scientific observation in Mr. Coxwell's great balloon. In the first ascent the height of nearly five miles must have been attained. The barometer stood at very little above eleven inches, the thermometer at 16 deg. Fahrenheit. Palpitation of the heart, laboured breathing, and a sense of sickness were experienced, at the greatest height, but not to a dangerous degree. The sound of a watch ticking boomed like a clock, and the rustling of the leaves of a book sounded like the rush of a gale of wind. In the second ascent, Mr. Glaisher and Mr. Coxwell were accompanied by eleven amateur voyagers, some of whom felt uneasily the pressure and tingling of the ears which former aeronauts have described, but which were not observed in Mr. Glaisher's first ascent.

THE LATE KING OF PRUSSIA.—In the recent article on "The Kings of Prussia (No. 553), the Czar Nicholas of Russia was, by inadvertence, referred to as father-in-law instead of brother-in-law of the late King of Prussia, having married the sister of Frederick William IV. Some interesting anecdotes of the late king, and of his queen, Elizabeth, will be found in No. 491 of "The Leisure Hour."

COPYRIGHT OF WORKS OF ART.—The new Act to amend the law relating to copyright in works of the Fine Arts, and for repressing the commission of fraud in the production and sale, is now in force. Before the Act was passed, paintings, drawings, and photographs had no copyright, and it is now provided that copyright in such works shall vest in the author for his life, and for seven years after his death. All copyright under the Act is to be deemed a personal or moveable estate, and to be assigned or licensed in writing. A register is to be kept at Stationers' Hall of all proprietors of copyright in paintings, drawings, and photographs. Penalties of £10, with forfeiture of copies made, can be summarily imposed, and the importation of printed works stopped under the Customs Acts.

PRUDENCE.—A prudent man will repair his house while the weather is fair, and not put off till winter; a careful pilot will take advantage of wind and tide, and so put out to sea, not stay till a storm arises: the traveller will take his time in his journey, and mend his pace when the night comes on, lest darkness overtake him. The smith will strike while the iron is hot, lest it grow cool, and so he lose his labour. So we ought to take heed to our day of grace, to make use of the present time, that when we come to die, we may have nothing to do but to die, for there will be a time when there will be no place for repentance, when time will be no more, when the door will be shut, when there will be no entrance at all.